

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6285

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 5180

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SP

SUBJECT: RESIGNATION OF FOREIGN MINISTER AREILZA

1. MARCELINO OREJA, FOREIGN AFFAIRS UNDERSECRETARY AND A MEMBER OF THE "TACITO" GROUP OF REFORMISTS, TOLD ME MORNING JULY 5 THAT FOREIGN MINISTER AREILZA HAS SUBMITTED HIS RESIGNATION AND HAS ALREADY LEFT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. OREJA SAID THAT FRAGA HAD ALSO RESIGNED AND HAD TELEPHONED HIM THIS MORNING TO REQUEST REINTEGRATION INTO DIPLOMATIC SERVICE. HE THOUGHT, HOWEVER, THAT FRAGA WOULD DEVOTE HIMSELF TO ORGANIZATION OF HIS PARTY, NOW CALLED REFORMA DEMOCRATICA.

2. OREJA COMMENTED THAT BOTH AREILZA AND FRAGA FELT THAT THEY
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HAD RECEIVED "A SLAP IN THE FACE" BY THE KING, WHO HAD NEITHER

CONSULTED THEM NOR TOLD THEM OF HIS INTENTION TO REQUEST ARIAS' RESIGNATION. THE ENTIRE OPERATION HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT SOLELY BETWEEN THE KING AND CORTES PRESIDENT FERNANDEZ-MIRANDA. NEITHER AREILZA NOR FRAGA FELT THAT THEY COULD CONTINUE UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES. OREJA SAID HE DOUBTED VERY MUCH WHETHER AREILZA COULD BE PERSUADED TO REMAIN UNLESS HE WERE OFFERED A VICE-PRESIDENCY AND THE NOMINATION OF AT LEAST SEVERAL MINISTERS, NEITHER OF WHICH SEEMED LIKELY.

3. OREJA SAID THAT IN ADDITION TO AREILZA AND FRAGA, HE BELIEVED THAT INFO MINISTER MARTIN GAMERO, EDUCATION MINISTER ROBLES PICQUER, AND JUSTICE MINISTER GARRIGUES WOULD ALSO RESIGN. FINANCE MINISTER VILLAR MIR WAS CERTAIN TO BE DROPPED.

4. WITH RESPECT TO NEW MINISTERS, OREJA SPECULATED THAT FEDERICO SILVA MUNOZ WAS WELL-PLACED TO TAKE FOREIGN MINISTRY, ALTHOUGH GARRIGUES MIGHT ALSO HAVE A CHANCE. AS FINANCE MINISTER EITHER LOPEZ DE LETONA OR PRESENT COMMERCE MINISTER CALVO SOTELO MIGHT BE NAMED. OREJA SAID THAT THESE WERE SHEER SPECULATION AS THERE HAD BEEN NO CONCRETE INDICATIONS AS YET. HIS PRINCIPAL CONCERN WAS THAT SUAREZ MIGHT CALL BACK TOO MANY OF THE "OPUS DEI" TECHNOCRATS (SUCH AS LOPEZ BRAVO) WHO WOULD MAKE THE SUAREZ GOVERNMENT LOOK TOO MUCH LIKE A FRANCO-PERIOD CABINET. SUAREZ, WITH HIS YOUTH AND HIS CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE KING, COULD GIVE A GOOD IMAGE, BUT WITHOUT NEW FACES IN THE GOVERNMENT AND A CLEAR COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE AND GIVE CLEAR LEADERSHIP TO THE REFORM PROGRAM, THIS WHOLE OPERATION MIGHT RUN INTO PROBLEMS.

5. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION AS TO WHAT HAD SPECIFICALLY HAPPENED TO BRING THE KING TO MAKE HIS DECISION TO FIRE ARIAS AT THIS TIME, OREJA COMMENTED THAT, AS IS WELL KNOWN, THE KING HAD WANTED FOR A LONG TIME TO CHANGE ARIAS, BUT FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS COULD NOT. HOWEVER, THE DETERIORATING ECONOMIC SITUATION WITH INCREASED INFLATION IN MAY HAD CAUSED IMPORTANT BANKERS AND FINANCIAL LEADERS (WHOSE ENTHUSIASM FOR DEMOCRATIC REFORM IS WELL UNDER CONTROL) AND WHO HAVE INFLUENCE WITH THE KING, TO BRING INCREASING PRESSURE FOR A CHANGE SINCE THEY WERE CONVINCED THAT NEITHER ARIAS NOR VILLAR MIR COULD COPE. IN ADDITION, THE OPPOSITION BUILDING UP WITHIN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL AND THE CORTES TO THE REFORM MOVEMENT COUPLED WITH ARIAS' INABILITY AND APPARENT

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UNWILLINGNESS TO LEAD HAD FINALLY CAUSED THE KING TO PREPARE HIS "SECRET" OPERATION WITH FERNANDEZ MIRANDA (WHO HAS LONG COUNSELLED THE KING TO DROP ARIAS.)

6. COMMENT: IN RELATION TO OREJA'S COMMENT ABOUT LOPEZ BRAVO, IT IS NOTED THAT HE, ALONG WITH SUAREZ AND SILVA MUNOZ, COMPOSED THE LIST OF THREE SELECTED BY COUNCIL OF THE REALM FOR PRESENTATION TO THE KING.

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